

1 July 1985

SUBJECT: Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits (Post Office and Civil Service Committee) Hearing on 27 June 1985

1. The Subcommittee chaired by Congresswoman Mary Rose Oakar heard testimony on the following proposed legislation:

(A) H.R. 989 - Extending early retirement eligibility to FAA/Flight Service Station Employees/Specialists.

(B) H.R. 1518 - Include INS and Customs Service Inspectors in the early retirement program.

(C) H.R. 1131 - Reduce the Civil Service Retirement System's 7% contribution rate to 6 1/2% for former military personnel who desire to make deposits for post-1956 military service. (1957-1970)

The hearing was conducted in three segments/panels. All testimony was received without any significant questioning or challenge by the members of the subcommittee.

2. The FAA air traffic controllers assigned to "tower" or "center" duties are presently covered under legislation that provides for an early retirement option. These controllers handle the "scheduled" air traffic, i.e., the commercial passenger flights. The "station" air traffic controllers handle the general (private - cargo) air traffic. General aviation has had over

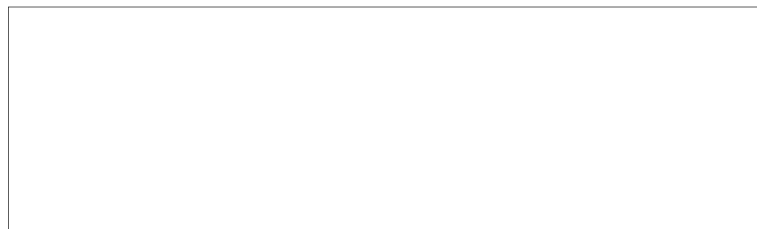
13,000 fatalities over the past ten years, more than 13 times the number of fatalities by scheduled air carriers. With less than 20% of the air controller personnel assigned as station controllers, they have handled almost half of all emergency flight assistance. With these impressive statistics it appears that H.R. 989 should be enacted into law without any serious opposition. A spokesman for the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists (NAATS) testified in support of H.R. 1131.

3. Testimony in support of H.R. 518 was presented by representatives of the National Immigration and Naturalization Service Council of the American Federation of Government Employees, and, the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU). The Immigration and Customs Inspectors are subjected to continuing job-related stressful conditions. The Immigration Inspectors process a heavy volume of travelers daily. Among these people, from all walks of life, can be armed and dangerous fugitives who may envision the Inspector as the roadblock between freedom and apprehension. The Customs Inspectors make arrests on the order of 13,000 per year. They make more arrests than all other federal agencies combined, based on information provided via the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Crime Information Center. Because of the hazardous working conditions that this category of personnel is constantly exposed to, H.R.1518 proposes the approval of an early retirement option for both the Immigration and Customs Inspectors.

4. Representatives of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) and The Retired Officers Association (TROA) made presentations in support of H.R. 1131. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Action of 1982 provides an option for government employees with post-1956 military service to make a

deposit to the government equalling 7% of their basic military pay thereby adding this military time to their total government service, for annuity purposes. However, during the period 1957 through 1970, the civil service employees were contributing only 6 1/2% of their salary to the retirement system. The H.R. 1131 addresses this inequity.

5. On several occasions during the hearing, the Chairperson, Congresswoman Oakar requested that the testifiers submit, in writing, case studies that would support their positions on the proposed legislation. Subcommittee member, Congressman John T. Myers, made an observation about a variety of occupations and the times in which we live. Gas station attendants, bus drivers, bank clerks, bill collectors, et al, are all possible targets of felons, yet, they are not entitled to an early retirement. The reply offered the explanation that the civil servants who are proposed for early retirement benefits (Immigration and Customs Inspectors) are actually enforcing the laws of the U.S. Government when they are subjected to hazardous and dangerous working conditions.



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